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DEFECTORS PLAYING A LARGE SPY ROLE

They Often Provide an Access to
Vital Iron Curtain Secrets

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By JACK RAYMOND

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15—According to Allen W. Dulles, the country's most experienced intelligence expert, "the piercing of secrets behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains is made easier for the West because of the volunteers who come our way."

The former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (and who should know better?) points out in his book, "The Craft of Intelligence," that information obtained from "volunteers" (he prefers that word to defectors) has "added to our basic fund of knowledge" about the Communist world.

Among these volunteers, he adds, may be soldiers, diplomats, scientists, engineers, ballet dancers, athletes "and, not infrequently, intelligence officers."

Exemplifying the last category was the fiction-like episode at the International Disarmament Conference in Geneva, where a member of the Soviet delegation dropped out of sight. The Russians waited five days, then reported his absence to the Swiss police.

Thereupon, the State Department here announced that the missing man, Yuri I. Nosenko, had requested political asylum in the United States. Furthermore, sources here said, although Mr. Nosenko was listed as an "expert" with the Soviet delegation to the conference, he was actually a ranking staff officer of the Komitet Gossudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (Committee of State Security) or K.G.B.

Details Secret

Exactly when did Mr. Nosenko come over? How? Why? There were no clear answers. Under pressure of Soviet official demands and to insure reciprocity some future time, Mr. Nosenko was produced

here yesterday for separate interviews by Soviet and Swiss embassy officials. Where were the interviews held? No immediate answer. (A fine secret requiring United States-Soviet-Swiss cooperation.) Where is he now? No answer. Had he been working for United States or other intelligence operations? Had the Russian Government found him out before he fled? No answers.

There are always more questions than answers in the field of intelligence. One obvious question is: How important is the information obtained from defectors? In the latest case, it may be very important. As a member of the Soviet disarmament delegation, Mr. Nosenko was in a position to know something about Soviet defense and disarmament policies, including weapons in place and under development.

Perhaps more important than that would be his reports on the structure of the Soviet intelligence organization, his personal assignments, the kind of information the Soviet authorities are seeking these days, the identities of their secret contacts abroad, the persons in Soviet officialdom who are trusted—or not trusted—in the

Through various means, the United States obtains considerable military, industrial and scientific information about the Soviet Union. What is difficult to come by is the flavor of political thinking within the Soviet hierarchy. What premises do they accept for day-to-day and year-to-year objectives? How do they make their decisions?

For such information, the defection of an intelligence officer is often the equivalent of a direct penetration into his headquarters and can paralyze for many months the service he left behind.

Multiple Mysteries

But what assurance is there that a defector is actually a defector? The bizarre world of secret intelligence, where things are not supposed to be what they seem, anyway, is peopled with double and triple agents, phony defectors and re-defectors.

Take some aspects of the strange story of Harold A. R. Philby, the former British diplomat who nearly rose to the top of one of the most important sections of British Intelligence before he finally joined two diplomatic colleagues, Guy Burgess and Donald MacLean, in defection to the Soviet Union.

Philby, under suspicion of being a Soviet agent, had been dismissed from the British Foreign Service. He was in Beirut, Lebanon, as a correspondent for a British newspaper, a job arranged for him without his knowledge so that British Intelligence could keep him under surveillance. Several residents of Beirut also were asked to keep an eye on him informally. The head of the Lebanese police was asked to watch him.

Philby married a young woman who was among those asked to watch him. He was found to have sought to enlist the services of a prominent Arab politician as a spy for—not Soviet, but British, Intelligence. The amazed Arab immediately told his equally amazed contacts in British Intelligence—for whom he was already working. Then Philby disappeared and surfaced later in the Soviet Union.

Was Philby a Soviet spy? A British spy? A double agent? Will he return to the West? And

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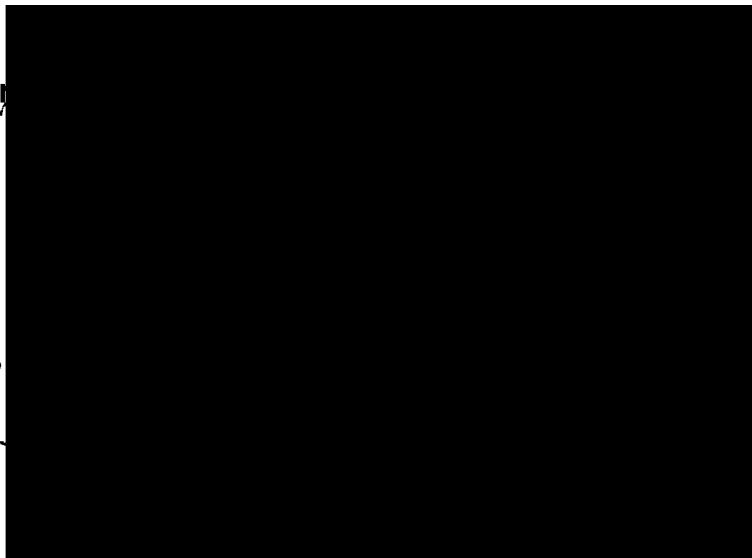
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